

Ministry and Oversight Committee (M&O) Report to PYM Annual Session 2017

Introduction

Ministry and Oversight Committee (M&O) cares for the spiritual health of Pacific Yearly Meeting, supports the Presiding Clerk, and plays a significant role in holding the Annual Session, among other things. We meet three times a year in person and daily during Annual Session. We are made up of nine members plus the Presiding Clerk serving *ex officio*.

This report provides information on the work M&O has done this past year, as well as the items that the committee intends to take to Annual Session for discernment by the body.

Friends General Conference (FGC) Affiliation

For several years, Ministry & Oversight Committee has considered affiliation with Friends General Conference (FGC). After a lengthy discernment process, including listening to feedback from Friends from across the Yearly Meeting, M&O united in proposing that the Yearly Meeting approve the following minute at Annual Session 2017: *Pacific Yearly Meeting will commence the process of seeking affiliation with Friends General Conference*. The committee circulated the minute and information on affiliation, including a PYM-FGC Frequently Asked Questions and Benefits of Affiliation document (found here: https://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/annual-session-minutes-reports/2017-annual-session-reports-and-minutes/#Ministry_Oversight_Committee), with PYM committees and officers, and Monthly Meeting clerks.

Given the response and feedback we have received regarding this proposed minute, the M&O Committee is in active discernment as to whether we will bring the minute for approval this year or hold it over for another year. We have heard the feedback on the proposal to affiliate with FGC and continue to believe that affiliation is where Spirit is leading the Yearly Meeting. We may not have provided enough time for Monthly Meetings to address Friends' enthusiasm, questions and concerns regarding affiliation. Most of the concerns we have heard were with M&O process, not with the actual question of affiliation. We recognise that it would be helpful to include with the proposal to affiliate a suggested budget for how to fund our relationship to FGC. We do not anticipate it changing significantly from what is currently spent at the Yearly Meeting level as we already send one observer to FGC Central Committee each year and would likely propose doing the same in the future.

M&O Name Change

M&O has reflected on the use of the word “oversight” in our committee’s name. Given the pain that the words “oversight” and “overseer” cause some current, and potential, Quakers, our committee has been in active discernment regarding a new name. The committee reached unity that our new name must remove the word “oversight” and also accurately describe the work of the committee.

Ministry and Care is a name that resonates with our committee. We believe the “Care” in Ministry and Care speaks to a quality of the heart and to a kind of action as in “caring” for others. Care can be organizational, emotional, spiritual, or physical. There are many ways to care.

We are sharing this new name proposal now should any Friends want to come and speak with us about it during Annual Session. The committee will discern over the course of the week whether it is time to bring a minute for approval to the body to change the committee’s name formally from “Ministry and Oversight” to “Ministry and Care,” or whether to hold this item over for another year.

Eldering Structure and Interest Group

Last year the Presiding Clerk requested assistance from a small group of Friends experienced in eldering to help create a spiritual ‘container’ for Annual Session as is practiced elsewhere among Friends. This consisted of both spiritual accompaniment of individuals with particular roles (such as keynote speakers) and Friends holding sessions by sitting in prayer before and during worship and plenaries. Following that limited experiment, which proved successful in provided grounding for the Yearly Meeting, M&O formed a Working Group to take on the responsibility of supporting the work of eldering at Annual Session 2017. The M&O working group has facilitated matching nine Yearly Meeting clerk and co-clerk sets with a Friend to accompany them for spiritual support. We intend that at least one person comes early to each Meeting for Worship, including plenaries, to hold the space and center the gathering in prayer.

Having named Elders is something that was dropped from Quaker practice in most places because it became abusive in some situations. We are very consciously working to bring back the beneficial aspects of eldering without creating a permanent group of people who wield inappropriate or disproportionate power in the Yearly Meeting. Eldering as we are practicing it in Pacific Yearly Meeting involves having Friends who are willing to serve holding space (in prayer) and providing spiritual accompaniment. A critical part of doing this work of eldering is being able to debrief and seek peer support from others who are also taking on the role at Annual Session. As such, the people serving in eldering roles will meet daily for prayer, reflection, and mutual support.

Any Friends wishing to support this eldering effort are encouraged to do so either by coming early to plenaries to hold the space or getting in touch directly with the Working Group which is convened by Valerie Nuttman, a member of M&O. We also encourage all Friends to come to Annual Session personally and spiritually prepared, which may mean additional time in prayer or meditation for personal grounding as well as praying for the Yearly Meeting and our time together.

In addition to providing the eldering structure, M&O, through our Eldering Working Group, is offering an Interest Group on eldering at this Annual Session. We encourage Friends to join us to share your perspectives, and hear from others, on this important topic. We recommend Friends revisit Pacific Yearly Meeting M&O's Faithfulness In Action document, particularly Appendix D on Eldering, which was released by Ministry and Oversight in 2009: <http://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/MandLFaithfulnessInAction.pdf>.

The Eldering Working Group will be meeting during open committee times and we encourage all Friends to come and be in contact.

Restructure Document

M&O has drafted a restructure and right-sizing proposal for the Yearly Meeting administration. The changes proposed reflect, to a large degree, the current operating structure, taking into account, for example, committees that exist in name but do not meet and are yet to be laid down. M&O shared this proposal with Nominating Committee in the first instance and then with other PYM committees and officers. We have received and incorporated feedback from these committees and will have the final draft posted to the PYM website shortly. We will seek approval of this restructure and right-sizing proposal at Annual Session.

Conflict and Welcoming

M&O has been addressing conflict at various levels within the Yearly Meeting and in different ways. We recognize that it is challenging and sometimes scary to engage with conflict, and still we have found it to be enormously rewarding. The processes we have engaged in have felt very difficult at times but the results have been often surprising and amazingly healing. We see that it is key to *name* conflict, *hear* people and create *safe processes*. To support the process, bringing in Friends who have done non-violent communication or conflict resolution can be a huge help.

Working with conflict can help clear the air, bring efficiency where we better utilise the gifts in our midst, and open the door to more Spirit-led work. When our own personal, or Meeting, house is not in good order, it is unlikely that God will call us to much in the way of service. God is much better able to use our gifts in service when we have been obedient to our spiritual health and internal integrity.

In order to continue to foster and support right relationships with each other, M&O has once again provided a list of Community Expectations for our community, which are available on the PYM website at this link: <https://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/2017/documents/2017-as-docs/community-expectations-as2017/>. We will be supporting a brief exercise at the first Annual Session plenary related to these Community Expectations.

We encourage Friends to be familiar with, and committed to, the Community Expectations document. We found respectful relationships to be more prevalent last year than in previous years at Annual Session - let's keep that up!

Supporting Monthly Meetings not under the care of a Quarterly Meeting

M&O is charged with supporting Monthly Meetings that do not belong to a Quarterly Meeting. We have been limited in the extent to which we have been able to do this work and continue to strive to do more for these Monthly Meetings. We hope to reach more areas that need our support in the coming year.

Spiritual Deepening on Committees

M&O has been working to deepen our collective spiritual life this year in a number of ways. We have been working with the Pendle Hill Pamphlet #439 by Robert Griswold *Marking the Quaker Path: Seven Key Words, Plus One* this year. We encourage all committees to find ways to grow closer in Spirit as you work together in service of Friends. We find it greatly enriching to our work and group harmony.

A few of the queries we have explored together are:

- How would you describe your own condition? Are you in a condition requiring change?
- What has been your experiences of divine reality? How has your life changed from these experiences?
- How can Friends seek to avoid a faith that is “notional” or “based in imagined or abstract thinking?”

Abuse Prevention Policy

After several years of work by the Youth Program Coordinator, and Children's Program Committee, Junior Yearly Meeting Committee, Ministry & Oversight Committee and others, a final draft of the PYM Abuse Prevention Policy has been produced. M&O will be facilitating the creation of a document at a later date that is related more broadly to respectful relationships in the Yearly Meeting.

This Abuse Prevention Policy document is explicitly for the prevention and reporting of abuse of minors at Pacific Yearly Meeting sponsored events. This policy defines abuse, describes the recruitment and screening (including reference and background checks) of

applicants for youth worker positions, outlines the training of youth workers, and outlines the requirements for mandated reporting and related internal procedures.

M&O has circulated this policy with PYM's committees and officers and is receiving helpful feedback. We are still looking for a lawyer to review the document who specializes in this particular area of law. We will be bringing a final revised policy for approval at annual session, pending further edits and approval by a lawyer. The current draft of the Abuse Prevention Policy can be found on the PYM website here:

https://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/annual-session-minutes-reports/2017-annual-session-reports-and-minutes/#Ministry_Oversight_Committee.

Coordinating with the Quarterly Meetings

The M&O Co-Clerks have met with the Quarterly Meeting clerks and the clerks of Quarterly Meeting M&O committees as part of an ongoing series of coordination calls established and led by the Presiding Clerk. We have found this to be a meaningful and enriching time together. The Yearly Meeting and Quarterly Meetings are struggling with and addressing similar issues and we look forward to the continued collaboration of our Friends community.

Minutes of Concern

M&O is continuing to labor with the clerks of a number of PYM action committees (Peace & Social Order, Latin American Concerns, Unity with Nature) and our own Racial Justice Subcommittee, to discern the practice of "Minutes of Concern" and how they impact Annual Session and the broader Yearly Meeting. We have spent considerable time in discernment at our M&O in-person meetings and held numerous teleconferences and one-on-one meetings with the relevant committees. We hope to continue this discernment work in the coming year.

Ministry & Oversight Subcommittees

Electronic Communications Subcommittee

The Electronic Communications Subcommittee (ECSC) has done a great deal of work this year. A status report from the subcommittee is appended to this document and covers current and recent activities of the ECSC.

Racial Justice Subcommittee

For the last two Annual Sessions, especially in the Affinity groups, we have heard from Friends that they would like to do some role-play to rehearse interrupting racial harassment. The Racial Justice Subcommittee's Interest Group this 2017 Annual Session will center on that topic while using two resources from AFSC. It will utilize the "Do's and Don'ts of Bystander Intervention" and show the video *Don't be a bystander* posted on the AFSC website.

At the College Park Quarterly Meeting Fall gathering 2016 the subcommittee sponsored a panel of attenders at the 2016 White Privilege Conference (WPC) in an effort to share what three Friends had learned and also to publicize the WPC.

The subcommittee looks forward to promoting and sharing more racial justice resources, actions, and practices in this next year.

Monthly Meeting Representatives Support

This Sub-Committee has not been functioning this year. M&O is in active discernment as to a way forward.

M&O Supporting Annual Session

M&O has been working hard to support a smooth and spiritually enriching Annual Session based on ongoing discernment and feedback we received through the evaluations received last year. The M&O co-clerks created a summary of last year's Annual Session evaluations to make it transparent to the community what we are hearing from you and to give an indication of how we are trying to change. See link: https://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/annual-session-minutes-reports/2017-annual-session-reports-and-minutes/#Ministry_Oversight_Committee.

This year there will be more opportunities for service at Annual Session through a sign up for volunteer opportunities. We look forward to seeing Friends get on board to help enhance our supportive culture and find joy in assisting others. We will also ring a bell before sessions start to help Friends be in the big tent and settled so that plenaries can begin on time with Friends gathered in worship. We will also be inviting Friends to a short period of worship as grace during each meal.

Please send memorial minutes and the names of those who have passed from your Meeting in the past year to Sally and Kylin. All names will be included at the Meeting for Memorials on Sunday.

M&O administers the Attendance Assistance Fund, which offers financial assistance on a case-by-case basis to Friends wanting to attend Annual Session who may require additional financial help in order to do so. The \$9,000 Attendance Assistance Fund is helping about 50 people to attend Annual Session this year.

As always, M&O members will be available to support Friends during Annual Session and we encourage you to find us should you need us. Our members are Janet Gastil, Julie Harlow, Bronwen Hillman, Sally Kingsland, Shayne Lightner, Joe Magruder, Kylin Navarro Burger, Valerie Nuttman, Jim Summers, and Diego Navarro (Presiding Clerk, *ex officio*).

Faithfully submitted,

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Electronic Communications Subcommittee -- Status Report to Ministry & Oversight
June 26, 2017

This status report to Ministry & Oversight covers current and recent activities of the ECSC this year.

1. The ECSC had two primary areas of focus this year:
 - 1.1. 2017 Annual Session Registration project
 - 1.2. High priority website maintenance and updates
2. Activity on the two other workgroups (Directory & Collaboration Tools and Resources & Funding) slowed this year, principally due to capacity constraints. However, 2 draft proposals have been developed that we will look to share and discuss at Annual Session.
3. ECSC Workgroup Updates:
 - 3.1. Website Redesign:
 - 3.1.1. The Website Redesign working group focused over the past year on simplifying and reorganizing PYM's main website, www.pacificyearlymeeting.org, and keeping content up-to-date.
 - 3.1.2. Additional changes being considered to make the website more useful include:
 - 3.1.2.1. Simplifying and reorganizing the existing website to make it easier to "find stuff".
 - 3.1.2.2. Clarifying website procedures and responsibilities (which PYM officers/committees are responsible for which aspects of the site).
 - 3.1.3. The workgroup supports creating a "Communications Committee" as proposed in the draft "restructuring or right-sizing of PYM" proposal from Ministry & Oversight. It would subsume the Secretariat Committee as well as this working group along with the ECSC.
 - 3.1.4. There is a need for a "Website Coordinator" or "IT Administrator" to manage technical issues (also mentioned in M&O draft; ECSC has a draft job description). Separating the technical work from site content management will make the task more manageable for 1 or more volunteers spending a limited amount of hours per month on support of the site.
 - 3.1.5. The workgroup is evaluating what target audiences we can reasonably support with the website and which audiences are best directed elsewhere.
 - 3.1.6. A change to Google for our site search engine is being considered, to replace the much more limited and inaccurate search function currently in place.
 - 3.1.7. We are considering the best approach to reinstitute role-based email addresses (e.g., clerk@pacificyearlymeeting.org rather than diego.navarro@xyz.com) for all PYM officers and committee clerks, to facilitate communication and generate a shared archive of committee communication (institutional memory). A proposal is in development in hopes that this could be implemented soon. This item is interdependent with the online directory capability under consideration.

- 3.1.8. The workgroup is considering opening a Google G-Suite for Nonprofits account for PYM to make use of collaborative tools. This would give us role-based email addresses and security features that would ease the administration of the site. To obtain a free account, an IRS letter is needed that confirms PYM's 501(c)(3) status. We will follow-up with the Ministry & Oversight and Finance Committees on this matter.
- 3.1.9. We have briefly considered alternative platforms for our website. Based on our discernment of the platform and site needs, we expect to continue with WordPress, despite its limitations, less limiting than we previously thought, and there are key benefits, including ease of maintenance and a user-friendly tool for our volunteer site and web content managers who come and go.
- 3.1.10. There is much work to be done to bring and keep the site up to date and consistent -- the current content varies widely in depth, format and organization. We need to discern what value there is in improving past content and how best to organize responsibilities going forward to promote greater consistency and timeliness.
- 3.1.11. Additional thoughts on the proposal for a Communications committee and other details on the progress of this workgroup can be found at (link needs to be updated for final report):
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RyDx3bOA7MAz7rdK-67PhmUHBfjFgKRX0dRC8qZNkzI/edit?usp=sharing>
- 3.2. Directory & Collaboration Tools:
 - 3.2.1. A proposal was drafted early this year for a new electronic directory and synchronous and asynchronous online communication tools for PYM. This incorporates the following:
 - 3.2.1.1. Online directory capability to support PYM and its constituent meetings and committees
 - 3.2.1.2. System of role-based emails, integrated with the online directory
 - 3.2.1.3. Synchronous collaboration tools; e.g., GoogleDocs
 - 3.2.1.4. Asynchronous collaboration tools, including email, online discussion forums and document storage
 - 3.2.2. The proposal is largely complete, pending review with the ECSC.
 - 3.2.3. We will look to discuss this and along with other ECSC items at the Western Friend and Electronic Communications Subcommittee interest group at Annual Session on "Friendly Websites and Other Online Resources", scheduled for Saturday evening at 6:45 PM.
- 3.3. Technical Resources and Funding:
 - 3.3.1. The initial draft proposal was created for funding the development and then maintenance of a new PYM website.
 - 3.3.2. Recent experience gained working on the website and 2017 Registration project is helping us move forward with much less dependency on funding.
 - 3.3.3. A funding proposal had been developed but needs to be reworked in view of the learnings over the past 6 months.
 - 3.3.4. This is pending further activity, once we have greater clarity on the website needs and direction (see Website Redesign Workgroup report).

4. 2017 Annual Session Registration Project:
 - 4.1. This effort is largely complete. While a focus of the project team this year was on simplifying the requirements and the design for the new registration application, it nevertheless was exceedingly complex. This, among numerous other lessons learned, are being captured for future registration project teams.
 - 4.2. Overall, the new registration site was well received and worked well. There were a handful issues that have been captured for future resolution or a different approach. One serious defect did occur, and this impacted nearly 2 dozen registrants who were overcharged, and this issue is being addressed by the registrars.
5. Committee Resources:
 - 5.1. A new Web Coordinator is needed to support the website. The committee is working to redefine the web coordinator position to separate out the technical aspects from the routine content updates and will be seeking a technical site administrator as we move forward.
 - 5.2. In addition, the committee needs at least one additional member who has sufficient project management aptitude, experience and capacity to support the work of the committee. This person would assist in the planning activities and deliverables required to help keep the different efforts on track and assist the workgroup leads in coordinating and managing project work.
6. The ECSC currently is comprised of:
 - 6.1. Alyssa Nelson, Davis – Website Redesign workgroup, assisting with website updates
 - 6.2. George Mills, Palo Alto – Website Redesign workgroup lead/convener, assisting with website updates
 - 6.3. John McCarthy, Strawberry Creek – Website Redesign workgroup, Directory & Collaboration Tools
 - 6.4. Kerwin Flowers, La Jolla – Directory & Collaboration Tools
 - 6.5. Lawrence Alderson, Orange County – Resources and Funding lead, ECSC convener
 - 6.6. Mary Klein, Palo Alto – Directory & Collaboration Tools lead, Resources and Funding workgroup
 - 6.7. Arthur Kegerreis, Orange Grove - Website Redesign
 - 6.8. Eric Moon, Berkeley

Submitted June 26, 2017 by Lawrence Alderson

Documents/references - the following materials are available in the ECSC Google Docs folder:

1. This report - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aNhZcxzQyyZTIolgi_YLWT77rRppKNuIaHRJwL_6d_8/edit?usp=sharing
2. Full Website Redesign Workgroup report: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RyDx3bOA7MAz7rdK-67PhmUHBfjFgKRX0dRC8qZNkzI/edit?usp=sharing>
3. Working draft of Proposed Online Directory and Collaboration Tools - https://docs.google.com/document/d/15TBnai3BtcPHFZx0UWputZaz_hfoPVLNVfiM68ceZZY/edit?usp=sharing